

HalfLife: Opposing Force: The Novelisation

by The Half-Life Novelist

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Summary: This is a retelling of the BLACK MESA INCIDENT through the eyes of ADRIAN SHEPHARD. Please enjoy and please review.

1. Incoming

****HALF-LIFE: OPPOSING FORCE: THE NOVELISATION****

****Incoming****

****New Mexico****

****8:30am, May 17, 2000****

****Subject: Adrian Shephard****

****Age: 22****

****Occupation: United States Marine Corps (Special Unit)****

****Rank: Corporal****

****Mission: Classified****

I sat on the slightly-cushioned, but very uncomfortable seat of the military helicopter. I stared at my knees, shaking with nervousness. This was my first real mission. I slowly inched my eyes up to face my straight-backed, non-shaking comrades in their khaki coloured uniforms. Only a few others hadn't ever done any missions before, but they at least had proper training. Why am I here?

Boot camp was an absolute mess. I signed up just in March and was meant for action in early July. The camp was ruthless and painful, but then the strange man in the blue suit who probably worked for the government came to the camp. I had seen him talking with the camp administrator several times through the glass windows of the

administrator's office during push-ups session. Then, one day, my instructor came striding into my training squad's dormitories and told me my 12 week training had been accelerated. To a couple of hours.

Suddenly, I was catapulted into sniper training, squad leading training, pistol training, the obstacle course and everything else that was meant to take a full 12 weeks to master. Why did this man convince the general to send an unexperienced soldier into a possibly extremely dangerous mission? So many questions, but no answers...

Back in the helicopter, my brave and proud fellow soldiers talked among themselves about the mission, mentioning a name: Black Mesa. A helicopter whirred past east of us, over the rocky orange canyons of New Mexico. I could see the pilot, steady and calm at the controls. The helicopter hovered away from my view further north, towards the mission location.

Another, a vomit-coloured, double bladed helicopter, appeared. It flew steadily, at the same speed as us. Suddenly, and quite surprisingly, just to add, flew by a... flying stingray? I couldn't believe it. I rubbed my eyes to check for hallucinations, but afterwards, another orange stingray flew by. None of the other marines had seen it.

"What is it, soldier?" barked the captain. I looked up at him, but didn't speak. I never was interested in speaking, I held the firm belief that actions speak louder than words. My parents thought I was mute when I never spoke until the age of six, when I said my first word.

"Well, soldier? Cough it up!" shouted the captain in response to my silence. I looked back up and realized I would have to speak, or I could get kicked out of the mission. Was that a good thing? I wondered.

The flying stingrays, which I had forgotten about in my little moment, flew above the vomit-coloured helicopter. Are they trying an attack? I thought to myself. A small glowing light appeared in the stingray's stomach. It expanded to cover its entire chest, until it stopped.

The light suddenly extended into a beam. The beam pierced the helicopter's hull and in a few seconds, the helicopter exploded into a ball of intense flame. The pilot and crew were nowhere to be found. They were all dead.

The whole team of marines heard the explosion and started swearing, looking for the source of the loud noise. They grabbed their guns and searched every nook and cranny of the helicopter for some type of action. The radio began blurting out orders and warning from the ground who must of seen the explosion of the helicopter and the strange alien stingrays. Alien. That word... I had heard that word some many times before in stories and documentary, but now the word had substance, had truth, had-

White surrounded my face, I couldn't see. I heard another explosion. The helicopter we were in shook. The captain fell out of the opening. Strange green electrical currents shot through the helicopter. White

again. My squad were screaming and panicking. We were being attacked as well.

The white appeared once more and I fell, probably, dead.

I woke with a start. I was on solid ground... and still alive! I looked around the landscape. I was in the rocky outside of the facility, possibly one of the entrances. The helicopter had crashed into a mesh wire fence. I was grateful that, instead of dying instantly in an explosion, the helicopter crashed, at least giving me a chance.

All around me, other soldiers were firing at strange creatures that were a metre and a half tall, brownish-green with only one eye. Again, I was startled by them. I found a dead one on the ground and knelt over to it. A plane flew over head. It fell and landed just past our area. The force of the crash threw me across the ground. Suddenly, I was unconscious again.

I drifted from consciousness to unconsciousness. I dreamily woke to a small, blood-stained room and in the door I saw a medic. He must have been the one who dragged me here. Through a tunnel, a soldier with a rifle appeared, running out, shooting towards the darkness. Just then, the same type of brown humanoid alien appeared, who seemed to be summoning some strange green electricity, like the stuff I saw earlier in the helicopter. Had they caused that? The electrical current was shot straight into the soldier's back. The medic ran out, gun ablaze, to take down the thing that had just killed the soldier. I suddenly slipped into the dream world once more.

2. Welcome to Black Mesa: The Facility

****Welcome to Black Mesa****

"1, 2, 3..." spoke a voice against the blackness of my current state of unconsciousness. "1, 2, 3, 4, 5" I woke in what seemed like an office of plain desks and closed cupboards. The walls were white and the carpet was mouldy blue. A table in the centre of the room was broken and the splintered wood was spread everywhere. Next to the table was a man with an Einstein-like haircut in a scientist's coat giving CPR to a bloody USMC soldier with another one (probably dead) slumped in the corner. "1, 2, 3..." he counted his pumps on the soldier's chest. The scientist, obviously not getting anywhere, stood up to find me standing also.

"Oh, you've woken up," he spoke in a calm, collected voice. I could now see that he was about fifty, fifty years too old for this madness.

"Corporal Shephard, is it?" he asked. I gave a silent nod in response. "I've read the tag on your uniform. I glad to see my life-saving efforts weren't in vain. I can't say the same for him."

I looked at the dead body in front of me. He looked big and buff with a cigar fallen out of his mouth.

"I'm afraid you've been through a serious accident. Most of your..." he paused and looked at the dead men below his feet. "...friends

didn't make it." He looked back up at me. "I was hoping that you soldiers had come to rescue us, but now it seems we're all in the same... situation. I think I saw a radio near the crash site where I found you. Perhaps you could go there for help?" I walked towards the door and nodded with appreciation for his bravery.

Just before I left, he said in a sympathetic tone, "I'm afraid these troops aren't going to make it. I hope you have better luck out there, or I fear none of us will get out of here alive." And with that remark, I opened the door and left.

The room I had entered into was a wreck. Before the situation (whatever that was) it must of looked like a normal, slightly wide corridor. But afterwards, three of the iron columns which were meant to hold up the ceiling had fallen and were sticking out of the ground like a javelin field after a competition.

At the end of the corridor room were two doors. One had been wedged closed with a table, the other leading to another maze of closets and doors.

Through the glass in the next room, I could see another soldier lying in a catscan machine with a scientist in some kind of weird spacesuit. As I looked closer at the soldier, I realized it in fact wasn't a soldier at all...at least, not anymore.

The zombie-military-thing was wearing military uniform, with the same body structure, but his head was covered by some kind of crab without claws. His stomach had been split open horribly, like someone had stuck a knife inside it and ripped it apart. Its stomach and intestines and anything else he could actually identify as human was spilling out, but that didn't seem to stop it from getting up.

The zombie stood and grabbed the scientist examining it. The scientist struggled and kicked and screamed. The zombie just continued on, without notice of the scientists pleas. It flailed it long, spindly arm at the scientists suit, ripping it open with its sharp, barbed claws. It then threw the scientist into the glass, braking it and letting the zombie out of its cage.

I carefully pushed the dead body away from me as the zombie got ever closer. The zombie got closer and closer, despite its slow pace. I got up and ran, hoping not to be its next victim.

I found my way through another doorway, where I found a security officer. He was wearing the custom blue undersuit with a black bullet-proof vest. He was fat and would probably fit in more as a mall cop.

I approached him and was about to warn him about the fast coming zombie but before I could, he said in a very scared tone, as if he thought if he said anything I was punish him: "Sorry, uh, Shephard, sir, uh, see I was not to open this door for you, until you agreed to help us. Besides, you wouldn't want to go out there without your armour vest, anyway. I left it for you where all the other soldiers are being treated. Just uh, come on, back here when y'found it." I looked at him in horror. Why wouldn't I agree to help? Surely this mission was to save the people of Black Mesa from this situation! I mean, I know I didn't get a briefing, but still!

I turned back to the zombie corridor. I would have to run past the zombie back to my armour. Then I could really get this show on the road.

I ran through the door. Around the corner, a zombie who could kill you in one well-placed swipe was waiting for me. I realized I could die. I realized I could even turn into one of those things. But, I had survived a helicopter crash (two, in fact, if you count the plane that knocked me unconscious) and I had survived flying stingray, electrical-shooting aliens and military zombies. So far I had a pretty big lucky streak. I hoped my luck would hold out.

I ran towards the zombie. It stared at me with its crab-shell face, just waiting for me to come closer. I strafed to the right to try and avoid it, but it flung out its arm. Suddenly, my reflexes kicked in and I ducked and rolled straight under its arm. I searched for some kind of infirmary or doctors office. Through one door I saw three soldiers being treated: one normal, one zombie and one strange thing in between, where his stomach wasn't open and the only thing wrong was a crab latched to his face. So that was how it happened!

A scientist approached me and asked "have you ever seen such a magnificent species?" I looked down at the zombie below me. Magnificent...magnificent? "These 'crabs' can completely control their hosts nervous system. Can you imagine what the next stage of mutation looks like?" Honestly, I didn't know and didn't want to.

I grabbed my suit. The HUD (Hheads-Up-Display) flickered into view. The suits power was at zero percent. Luckily in my tiny training course, I learnt all about how to charge it. I decided to get back to the security guard. The zombie had seemingly moved to another area to terrorize and kill. I still needed to get back at that zombie.

When I found the guard, he seemed happy enough to let me throw.

"Okay Shephard, I see you've found your power vest. That should keep you safe out there." He looked at his shoes sheepishly, then looked back up. "See now, I've heard rumours that you troops might not actually be here to rescue us. Just- just don't forget about us out there. Alrighty? Okay, I'll let you through now."

Finally, the guard walked towards the door controls and placed his eyes in front of the scanner. A beeping noise sounded and the door slid open.

"Good luck, sir!" the guard exclaimed as I left the room.

The next room was plain, with the only thing of interest being a tool box and a broken faulty wire. I noticed the monkey wrench hanging out of the toolbox. Finally! A weapon! I grabbed up the wrench and dared any filthy zombie to just try to cross my path. Still, before the crash I had a laser pointer pistol that could hold seven bullets in a clip. Oh well, I'll find one, I thought.

Before I had taken another step, two of those strange crabs, which had turned those people into zombies, suddenly fell from a hole in the ceiling. Out of shock, I jumped back and hid. If one of those things got near me, I could be a zombie like the rest of them. If only I had my pistol.

I grabbed my monkey wrench and slowly crept out of my hiding spot around the corner. I watch the 'headcrabs' very slowly shuffle towards me. Seems all these aliens had the curse of slow walking. I strolled towards the headcrab, obviously in no danger and held my monkey wrench high, when...it jumped. Well, more like leapt! It threw itself towards me and darted straight to my stomach. If it hadn't missed, I would be dead. Life lesson 1: Never underestimate ANY enemies.

I was knocked over by the force of the headcrab. My head banged the concrete floor and my arms ached. The headcrab on my belly was making fast work though. It had gotten itself up and was closing in on my face. I grabbed my wrench and threw it into the crab. It squished under the heavy iron and weird alien liquid spurted all over my vest.

The second headcrab jumped as well, but this time I was ready. As it jumped, I swung my arm and it collided with the hard shell of the headcrab with great force. What was even greater was the fact that I, then, ran straight to the crab and smashed it in its weak underbelly, all before it had even gotten up. I looked at my work, and thought it good.

Finally I found the staircase that should lead me to the surface. Before I ascended them, I turned to my left and looked peered through the glass of an heavy-duty iron door. I saw a security guard talking to- talking to the g-man in the blue suit? How did he get here? Was he involved with the mission somehow? Why did he bring to this hellhole?

Before I could knock on the door to try and get his attention, he finished his conversation with the guard and left the room, through industrial- strength double doors. I tried to get the guard's attention, but he didn't notice me.

I decided to carry on with many question in my head. Why, why, why? The metal stairs clangs under my feet. After two flights, I found a door. My head still spinning, I pushed the door open to find the rocky plains of the Black Mesa Facility in front of me. A platform had been built along the semi-circle of the formation.

As soon as I stepped out of the door, I realized the path had broken up. It was like a bridge after a earthquake, with chunks of concrete broken off. I looked across the gap. It seemed to be about two metres long, a fairly long jump, especially with all the heavy gear I had on. I walked back about three metres, almost to the door, and ran. Step after step, the gap came closer. I leapt for the other side. Close, closer, closer. I extended my fingers as far as I could without making them pop out of their sockets.

I missed. I began to fall through space. I looked down and saw where I was headed. Down miles and miles of canyon into a tiny river, just like in the old roadrunner cartoons. I closed my eyes. I was sure the sense of adrenaline was more than make up for the luxury of seeing.

My head banged the ground. That was weird; I could have sworn there would be at least five seconds more of falling. And plus, I was alive. I inched my eyes open, almost scared of what I would find.

Solid ground. Just two metres lower than the broken platform was a rough ledge. Feeling like an idiot, I pulled myself up to my feet.

I groped along the passage, trying desperately not to fall. Centimetre after centimetre, I found my way across the rock wall and back up to the platform. Life lesson 2: Look before you leap, I noted.

At the other end of the platform, I found a dead 'lightning-shooter-thing' surrounded in a pool of yellow alien blood. I found a slightly used knife in its stomach. I decided it could be useful, so I stuck my hand into the hard shell skin of the... Lightshot...and felt the sharp blade of the knife. I pulled on it and blood squirted all over me. Gross.

3. Welcome to Black Mesa: The Underground

****Welcome to Black Mesa (cont.)****

I turned to the door behind me. Locked. I shook the door, but there was nothing I could do. The only other door was on the other side of the bridge between each side of the canyon, problem was, it was broken. Again. It was a smaller jump than before, only a metre and a half, but this time there was nothing between me and the roadrunner river.

Once more, I gave myself a running start. The gap suddenly seemed a lot bigger. My legs worked like a machine, throwing me across the broken bridge in one huge leap. This time the landing was a complete success. I landed without so much as a stubbed toe.

As I examined the door, I noticed there wasn't a door. It had, in fact been ripped off its hinges. The actual door was lying right next to the opening. What kind of thing could do that?

Inside there was nothing but a door too covered in rubble to even think about trying to open and tiny tunnel half a metre high. I felt silly, actually thinking about getting in the tunnel. It was too small! I would never fit...could I? No, it was stupid. A stupid idea. I crouched down and got into the tunnel, despite what my brain was telling me. It was actually surprisingly large. I could fit my whole body in it if I lay down and pulled myself through.

I had almost made it to the end of the tunnel, when a headcrab came crawling through from the left. I froze. I couldn't fight a headcrab in a tunnel, but it seemed like I had no choice. I fumbled for my monkey wrench, but remember my knife and flicked it out in an instant. The headcrab had seen me now. It couldn't jump now so it was definitely going to be easy to kill. I swung the knife when it jumped. Somehow, they could change the angle of their jumps. It lunged for my face. My free hand flew out in front of me and its legs dug into my arm. I shook it off and stabbed it in the belly. My arm was bleeding really badly. I needed medical attention quick. I stumbled out the hole and rolled out.

I got a sudden sense of déjà vu. I had been here before. The electric fence, recently dead soldiers, the crashed helicopter. What? The crashed helicopter was Goose 3, our helicopter. Crashed into the fence just like before...that's it! When I first arrived, I was here

before the planes force knocked me unconscious. I saw a radio through the electric fence. I could radio for help and get out of here! Though that would be betraying the scientist who saved me and the guard who let me through, though I shouldn't even be here. If that g-man in the blue suit hadn't sweet-talked the administrator, I wouldn't be in this place at all.

I looked for gap in the fence. Nothing at all. Not even the smallest of cuts were in the fence. The helicopter could be used to climb over the fence, but the electrical current was running through that as well. In fact, there was no way across without the electrical current off.

I looked around for an electrical control centre. The only way I didn't look was a dark tunnel with large silo doors which just barely open. I realized if I didn't look I would probably just rot here, so I trudged down the path into the increasingly intimidating tunnel.

The tunnel actually turned out to be empty apart from a first-aid pack, which I patched up my bleeding arm with. I mentally slapped myself for being scared and then emerged on the other side. I found the electrical control box I was looking for, but it was covered with mesh. The power boxes seemed to be overloading and electricity was spewing everywhere inside the mesh. A soldier was slumped next to a power box and another was inside, working on the door. The second the security guard touched the door, he was instantly electrocuted. He shook and made strange noises until his body came to a full halt. I did not think I was getting that way.

I found a vent nearby. It was open and I could see the other end inside the power box area. Suddenly, I was reminded of Bruce Willis. I didn't enjoy the idea of crawling around in vents anymore than tunnels, but hey, no other way in. The vent did a u-turn into the mesh. It was very difficult to navigate the corners. I had to do a full 35-point turn just face the right direction. As you can imagine, it was VERY time consuming.

I was inside the mesh, but between the four boxes were massive amounts of energy spreading between. I carefully avoided the electrical currents until I reached the door. It was insanely dangerous, with the bolts travelling at the speed of light and could appear anywhere at any time.

I searched the guard's body for weapons or a radio, but he was clean. He didn't even have a pistol, like the others. The soldier however, had quite the little present for me. A Desert Eagle with 7 bullets. Laser pointer, 7 bullets in a clip, excellent design and great paint job. I could have been in love.

It didn't take me long to find the turn-off switch. I flipped open the newly-de-electrified door and ran back to the tunnel. Inside I still found nothing, so continued. Once in the middle of the tunnel though, I heard a strange noise like a... I couldn't think of anything that it sounded like, a sort of sci-fi whirring. I jumped of shock and turned to see a strange green ominous glow floating a metre high and about the size of two footballs. From the glow, a Lightshot appeared, its lightning already charged.

I ducked down and commando rolled to the right. I pumped the

Lightshot with 2 pieces of lead. It fell to the ground before it could release its charge. I gave a sigh of relief. I had never seen anything like it, apart from the other dead ones. It was a skinny thing, about 50 centimetres wide at the most. It was a sludgy mix of brown and green, covered in a shell-like skin. I turned back to the exit, and left the claustrophobic tunnel.

The light brown helicopter was not a small one. It was seven metres long with two machine guns and enough space for 14 soldier, plus 3 standing and a pilot. I grasped the side of the helicopter and pulled myself up. I had half a mind just to throw my vest over the fence and then jump on. I dawdled along the top of the helicopter until I reached the tail, where I hopped off heavily.

I sped over to the radio, even though it was at arm's length. I tapped and fiddling with the controls, desperately looking for another USMC station. A gruff voice cracked into the radio and I stopped and listened:

"Shephard, you're alive! Listen, we've been cut off pretty bad and orders have come in to pull out. Repeat! Pull out! Apparently they've got other plans for Black Mesa now... if you can make your way through the transit system, you can probably reached the surface where we are pulling out. Good luck! Over," the static covered the sound waves and I couldn't hear anymore. I gave desperate attempt to find them, but with no avail.

I found the red ladder to the transit system; after all, it stuck out like a pimple in a pumpkin. A large hole in the ground surrounded by a thin outline of red-painted iron isn't exactly hard to miss. I climbed down the ladder to find the industrial area of the facility. Large metals pipes were built going over catwalks, catwalks built over a very long fall, tongues hanging from the ceiling. Tongues hanging from the... I looked up. Above me were strange red blobs the size of my chest with disgusting long white tongues hanging down, dancing the fumes of the underground.

I walked down the catwalk, cautiously avoiding the tongues which led up to a fairly unsatisfactory set of deadly teeth which would crunch my bones probably instantly. The tongues moved towards me as I navigated the three or four... Tongue Snatchers. The tongue of one caught my leg. It pulled me up off my feet and left me dangling, going slowly up. I got my knife and started cutting at it. Slice after slice, I was getting nowhere. It must have been made of alien super-fibre or something. I came closer to the mouth. A horrible panting filled my ears. The teeth chomped and chomped, impatient for its meal. I grabbed the handle of my Golden Eagle and aim for the mouth of the Tongue Snatcher. I pulled down on the trigger and the Tongue Snatcher suddenly let go of me. I tried to grab the tongue, but it slipped away into the body. The grotesque body began to spew out skulls and bones from its previous victims. They landed on top of me and covered me in Tongue Snatcher saliva and blood. I landed on my head. Owwww, I thought. I rubbed my head as hard as I could until it hurt even more. I stumbled to the iron door and proceeded to the next room.

I crossed a platform over a hole into another industrial area. I found a Lightshot bent over a soldier, probably eating it. I almost pulled out a gun and shot it in the head, but I decided to use stealth and not waste the four bullets I had left. I snuck up on it.

Slowly, slowly...I stabbed it through it's with the knife and gave it a hit on the head with the monkey wrench. Dead.

The soldier who was surrounded in yellow and red blood was wearing a gas mask. That either meant he found one and thought it was fashionable or, that he was a shotgun soldier. I searched him for a shotgun. SPAS-12, 12 ammo, 8 in a clip. This would be perfect for short-range shooting.

I examined my shotgun as I went lower down the old transit system via ladder. A Lightshot appeared and I tested my shotgun. I ran up to it, stuck the barrel in front of his face and pulled the trigger. A satisfying BOOM filled the air and the alien fell dead, its head splattered with blood.

The pipes in this area had broken and steam spurted out. I figured it wouldn't be too bad if I walked through. I was wrong. Very wrong. Heat seared through my body and burnt my arm armour. I tripped over myself and fell back, away from the burning gas. I smelt something burning. I looked around but nothing was on fire. Must just be the steam, I thought. I went to get my monkey wrench when saw my arm. Fire!

I ran around, looking for water. My arm's armour was on fire and if I didn't do something fast, I would become fried soldier. I turned the corner. There was nothing on the level to help. I tried to climb down to the ladder, but it was too hot and too hard. I jumped down the gap. Don't worry, I said to myself, it's only about thirty-five rungs. I chickened out and tried to grab on to the rungs halfway through the fall. My arm hit a rung and flew backwards, making my body face up. Not learning my lesson, I tried to grab the ladder with my legs. My feet got wedged between two rungs and I suddenly flipped over, my head hitting a rung. I was hanging upside down.

I looked down to where I was. Two rungs above the ground. That was way too close. The old rusty rung buckled under my weight and I fell to the ground, head first. I quickly got up. I saw water! Beautiful dark fresh water! I drowned my arm in the muddy liquid and the burns on my sleeve and partially arm cooled down. My arm emerged from the water, black in a few small places, but overall, okay. My armour sleeve however was completely burnt off. All of a sudden I felt very protective of my arm.

I passed through the underground finally, to some kind of high voltage...place. The room was surrounded by a 'moat' of acid. I crossed the broken iron bridge and looked around me. In each corner there was a vertical high-voltage current in an iron casing. There was no door out except a door on the higher catwalk. I began for the ladder but as soon as I got close, one of the high-voltage generators blew off part of its casing.

The ladder was shot straight in two by blue electrical currents. I jumped back, hoping not to get the same fate. The electricity flew up the room to the ceiling and attacked. An enormous piece of concrete came crashing down. I jumped out of the way and it destroyed a third of the floor. Shit! I swore in my head.

More of the floor fell victim to the menace. Only half the floor was left in half a minute and I didn't have a way out. Crash! Bang! Less than half of the floor remained in front of me. The electricity

froze. For a second, I thought it had done its deeds. All of a sudden, a catwalk came crashing down, half of it still connected, the other lying in front of me. I saw it as my only chance. Perhaps I could get to the door and escape this nightmare. The acid from the moat seemed to be rising. This was my only chance. I leapt onto the derelict catwalk. It shakedâ€¦and then stilled, like an animal accepting me into its home. I clambered up the vertical slope to the roofs metal beams where the other catwalks had once been. I balanced along the metal beam and found the door. It didn't open.

The acid was gaining speed. I pounded against the door, begging for it to open. I realized I couldn't open it, anymore than I could stop the acid. I saw through the window to the door controls. Maybe I could smash the window and get through! I went in front of the window. I bundled my shaking hand into a fist. Punch! My knuckle went red. The window didn't break. What kind of a window was this! Was it a freea-, I fell silent. The man. The g-man in the blue suit was standing in front of me, through the window.

End
file.